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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 TOKYO 001207

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NEA FOR DAS PATTON, DRL/NESCA FOR PALMIERI

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: BMENA FORUM FOR THE FUTURE PLANNING MEETING IN
TOKYO, APRIL 24-25

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11. SUMMARY. At the Forum for the Future planning meeting in Tokyo on April 24-25, participants discussed political reform and sustainable development as the two thematic pillars for the 2008 Forum. The Forum subministerial will be held on June 9 in Dubai, followed by a senior officials planning meeting on June 10. The Forum for the Future will be held in Abu Dhabi on October 18-19, with the Parallel Civil Society Forum occurring a few days earlier. The U.S. delegation stressed that civil society participation should be at the same as or increased levels from previous years. Japan and the UAE agreed to support the creation of a BMENA interactive website, and Morocco called on the G8 leaders to endorse the Forum at their July summit in Hokkaido Toyako. END SUMMARY.

Forum for the Future Themes

12. NEA DAS Kent Patton led the U.S. delegation to the first 2008 G8-Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Forum for the Future planning meeting in Tokyo on April 24-25. DRL/NESCA Office Director Francisco Palmieri, NEA/PI Foreign Affairs Officer Blake Thorkelson, and Embassy Tokyo poloff Evan Reade also participated. The meeting was co-chaired by

Japanese MOFA Bureau of Middle Eastern and African Affairs Deputy Director General Shinsuke Sugiyama and Emirati Assistant Under Secretary Tareq Ahmed Al-Haidan. Japan, as G8 president, and the UAE will host the Forum for the Future in Abu Dhabi on October 18-19, 2008.

¶3. Japan and the UAE circulated four proposed themes and several sub-themes for the Forum ministerial. Delegates from Egypt, Bahrain, Morocco, Yemen, Canada, Germany, and Jordan suggested that there were too many themes for foreign ministers to discuss in one day, and that this year's topics should avoid overlap with those of other BMENA ministerials. DAS Patton recommended that representatives from the finance and education ministerials should report outcomes to the Forum for the Future. Yemeni Prime Deputy Foreign Minister Mohy Al-Dhabbi and Bahraini Director of Bilateral Relations Dhafer Alumran emphasized the need for continuity from previous Forum themes. Egyptian Assistant Foreign Minister Raouf Saad said that the theme of "political reform" should be changed to "political issues," but Italian representative Antonella Uneddu reminded all participants that political reform, public participation, and civil society are the core themes of BMENA, a point that several other participants seconded.

¶4. By the end of the discussion, participants agreed to develop further two thematic pillars with several sub-themes:

(1) Political reform

(a) The progress in democratic reforms and processes including the expansion of public participation

(b) Women's empowerment (political, economic and social participation)

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(2) Sustainable development

(a) Youth and unemployment, educational reform, vocational and technical training and labor market

(b) Cooperation among governments and private sectors including civil society organizations

--Environment

--Food crises

--Humanitarian and development aid

(3) Review of G8-BMENA initiatives

2008 Schedule of Events

¶5. Japan and the United Arab Emirates proposed the following 2008 schedule of events, to which the other delegations agreed:

June 9 -- Subministerial (Dubai)

June 10 -- Senior officials' preparatory meeting (Dubai)

October TBD -- Parallel Civil Society Forum (Dubai)

October 18 -- Senior officials' preparatory meeting (Abu Dhabi)

October 18 -- Ministerial dinner on political issues (Abu Dhabi)

October 19 -- Forum for the Future ministerial (Abu Dhabi)

Civil Society Participation

¶6. DAS Patton said that as the schedule and themes have been agreed upon, the co-hosts should invite civil society participants through the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD)

NGO partners from Yemen, Turkey, and Italy. The invitation should state the themes for this year so that civil society groups can take them into account at their planning meeting in Istanbul on May 10. (Note: The invitations and themes were distributed to the DAD on April 30.) The UAE called for more G8 NGOs to participate, but Moroccan Bilateral Relations Director General Yousuf Amrani cautioned that BMENA governments need to enhance the dialogue with their own NGOs first. Alumran of Bahrain said that the president of the Foundation for the Future should be invited to the subministerial to provide an update on its programs.

17. In a side meeting with the UAE's Al-Haidan, DAS Patton stressed the importance of maintaining at least the same number of civil society participants as in prior years, i.e., 25 in the subministerial and 56-60 in the Forum ministerial. He also informally discussed with several delegations ways to ensure that civil society initiatives prepared for the Sanaa Forum, such as the BMENA NGO Principles, could be incorporated into this year's events.

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Follow-up Mechanisms

18. Egypt's Saad recommended a new mechanism consisting of an end-of-year report by the co-chairs, including a summary of the year's activities and recommendations for the next year's co-chairs. Alumran of Bahrain said that the Forum Chair's Summary is sufficient and suggested an interactive BMENA website based in a G8 country. The website would serve as a central clearing-house on all the BMENA initiatives and points of contact. The German representative thought that email communication was sufficient, but the Italian representative thought the website proposal was useful and proposed that the DAD NGOs assist in maintaining it. Sugiyama agreed that Japan and the UAE could launch a website together and promised to discuss the proposal again at the June 9 subministerial. Amrani of Morocco also asked Japan as the co-host to explore a G8 leaders' endorsement of the Forum in the July 7-9 Hokkaido Toyako Summit documents. (Note: In a side conversation, Sugiyama asked DAS Patton for U.S. assistance in garnering G8 support for the inclusion of such language.)

19. DAS Patton has cleared this message.
DONOVAN